



PRESS RELEASE – 27 AUGUST 2019 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parish Council calls time on County Council project

Eynsham Parish Council request the Secretary of State 'call in' this application.

'Flawed, a waste of taxpayers' money and an assault on the environment and resident's air quality' is how Eynsham Parish Council (EPC) consider Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) recent planning application for a proposed Eynsham Park & Ride and associated Bus Lane work.

This so far speculative proposal by OCC for a £35 million plus project remains completely unfunded¹ other than by Council Tax revenue of which more than £3 million has already been spent by OCC. Not only unfunded but the published highway designs do not accommodate the Eynsham Northern Development² (2200 homes) or the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (1000 homes) meaning the highway design and implementation work will have to be re-done when these developments commence.

The Parish Council is requesting a 'call in' so that the Secretary of State will determine the application under current planning law³, this will prevent Oxfordshire County Council considering its own submission as it proposes to do.

This project will have wide ranging effects, the A40 is a major East/West route carrying traffic from Wales and the West of England, as well as Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, East towards the Oxford hospitals and beyond towards London. More than 32,000 cars a day pass the site of the Park & Ride project at Eynsham.

The proposed Park & Ride caters for only 850 cars and cannot be expanded as it will be surrounded by other development, particularly the proposed Northern Development at Eynsham of some 2200 houses.

The Parish Council ask, 'How can £35 million for a car park for 850 cars represent good value?' Notable objectors to the proposal include OCC Highways, the Environment Agency, Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) along with many local residents and resident pressure groups.

The Parish Council's concerns, based on effectiveness of the project to reduce congestion on the A40, geography of the site and environmental damage, have been ignored.

The Parish Council action to call in the application is driven by the conviction that this is in the interests of residents of the Lower Windrush and West Oxfordshire, as well as those of Oxfordshire and further afield.

In the view of EPC there is no commercial case for the present plans; and far more efficient use of taxpayers' money can be better served by much needed changes to the existing road network, greater improvement to the efficiency of the buses or by establishing a rail based alternative.

[Ends.]

Further information

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Notes for Editors

¹ This is currently a completely UNFUNDED project. OCC has suggested that Department of Transport (DoT) funds have been acquired; true they have been allocated by DoT, but delivery of this funding is totally dependent on an acceptable Business Case being approved by DoT. That Business case is now more than 2 years overdue and has NOT been agreed by DoT. This means that the only funding so far for the project has been from OCC revenues, Council Tax payments from which has come a speculative £3 million+ spend by OCC.

² Northern Development of Eynsham otherwise known as the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village (OCGV).

³ The Secretary of State can determine the application under Regulation 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The first formal consultation resulted in OCC Highways presenting objections to their own scheme as well as objections from the Environment Agency and the Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust questioning the inadequate flood prevention and the unacceptable impact on the environment and local wildlife and birds. In addition, many, many objections were raised by local residents during this consultation.

The application document R3.0057/19 ran to some 95 separate documents totalling, according to an OCC Officer working on the project, around 1200 pages.

Despite the huge size of this application, Councillors from Eynsham Parish Council (EPC) studied the documentation closely and, in addition to this research incorporated as many of the comments raised at the 'Future of the A40' Public Meeting in Eynsham Village Hall on Friday 12th July as was possible. That meeting was attended by Cllr. Constance, OCC Cabinet member for Environment supported by Raymond Cheung, Senior Officer from the Project Team and by Charles Mathew, County Councillor representing Eynsham. The packed meeting was chaired by Gordon Beach, Chair of Eynsham Parish Council and ran to more than two hours as questions were put to the panel. The meeting was described as 'lively' by residents who attended.

The response from Eynsham Parish Council to the application runs to some seven pages of A4 as the Parish Council outline the areas where the scheme contravenes planning policies and considers unsatisfactory issues. Here is a sample of the points raised:-

- Air quality will be compromised with the twice-daily movement of 850 vehicles in addition to the dust and pollutants from HGVs/machinery whilst creating the P&R.
- According to OCC research this scheme will result in an overall deficit in biodiversity units by approximately 22% reduction on the baseline.
- The application is contrary to WOLP Policy EW10 – Protection of the Oxford Green Belt and NPPF 143 and is inappropriate development of the green belt.
- The Park & Ride (P&R) is in the wrong location to meet the impact of the planned developments within West Oxfordshire.
- There are 2 substantial omissions in the list of proposed completed developments by 2021. These are (1) Northern Development (2200 homes) and (2) West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (1000 homes).
- Traffic is able to 'short cut' the proposed roundabout and access the layby when traffic is heavy.
- Considering the continually changing details and scale of this application, insufficient public consultation has been undertaken.
- EPC believe that all hedgerows should be retained, and the P&R redesigned to work with the existing constraints of the site.

- The proposed development would result in significant adverse effects at a local level during the construction phase, along the A40 and to Eynsham.
- Lower lighting columns should be considered which may benefit neighbouring residents and bats/ecology.

Some other useful references for Editors;

INVESTING IN THE A40 CONSULTATION November 2015

https://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/variable/organisation/37/attachments/A40_investment_response.pdf

A40 EYNSHAM PARK & RIDE AND BUS LANE SCHEME CONSULTATION January 2017

https://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/variable/organisation/37/attachments/A40_P&R_response.pdf

CONNECTING OXFORDSHIRE - IMPROVING TRANSPORT ALONG THE A40 CORRIDOR January 2019

https://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/variable/organisation/37/attachments/OCC_A40_PRConsultationResponse_Jan2019.pdf

A40 PARK & RIDE - RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION July 2019

https://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/variable/organisation/37/attachments/R3_0057_19%20P&R%20A40_Final.pdf

Details of the planning application can be found on [Oxfordshire County Council's website](#).

<http://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/swiftlg/apas/run/WPHAPPDETAIL.DisplayUrl?theApnID=R3.0057/19&theTabNo=3&backURL=%3ca>

Eynsham Parish Council's full response to the application is available on [Eynsham Online](#) and here;

<http://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/swiftlg/MediaTemp/206070-56219.pdf>

Find out more about Eynsham here;

www.eynsham-pc.gov.uk